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LETTER DATED 30 AUGUST 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF UGANDA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement issued by the Government of the Republic of Uganda in response to the false allegations made by the Sudan against Uganda during the 3690th meeting of the Security Council, held on 16 August 1996.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Prof. SEMAKULA KIWANUKA, Ph.D
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Statement dated 28 August 1996 by the Government of the Republic of Uganda in response to Sudanese allegations made against Uganda during the Security Council's debate of 18 August 1996 on the Secretary-General's report pursuant to resolution 1054 (1996) (S/1996/541 and Add.1-3)

The public declaration by the Sudanese representative of his country's hatred for Uganda may have come as a shock to many, but to us, it just goes to confirm our long-held suspicion that this could indeed be one of the reasons for the regime's well-known destabilization policy against our country.

After this honest, albeit sinister declaration, however, they sought to justify their evil schemes against our country by blaming what is essentially an internal problem on Uganda.

The Sudan alleged, inter alia, that:

(a) Since 1984, Uganda has been giving financial and moral support to the insurgents in the Sudan;

(b) Uganda has sabotaged efforts to normalize relations between the two countries, including violations of Sudanese territorial integrity by our troops; and

(c) It does not support or harbour the so-called "Ugandan Christian Fundamentalist" rebels because these are based in areas controlled by the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) etc.

The above allegations and denials are not only blatantly false but also dishonest and are only calculated to hoodwink the entire world into believing that the Sudan is a victim rather than the prime perpetrator of terrorism and aggression that it is.

It is our hope, however, that the Security Council, through its dealings with the Sudan on the issue of the attempt on the life of the President of Egypt, is now aware of the extent to which the regime will go to avoid taking responsibility for its actions even in the face of overwhelming evidence. We would like to invite the Council and the international community at large to join us in dismissing the Sudanese allegations and protestations of innocence with the contempt they deserve.

It will be recalled that, on several occasions, Uganda has presented to the Council irrefutable evidence and catalogued numerous incidents and atrocities committed by the Sudanese regime and its sponsored elements against the people of Uganda.

For their part, the Sudanese authorities have never produced any shred of evidence to substantiate their wild allegations against our country.

What is more disturbing, however, is the fact that while pretending to preach peace and reconciliation, facts on the ground indicate that the Sudanese regime has stepped up its unprovoked destabilization activities against Uganda, which started way back in 1986, as illustrated below.

Our problems with the successive Governments of the Sudan

The National Resistance Movement (NRM) Government took power in Kampala on 26 January 1996. By March, the National Resistance Army (NRA) had established control over all the borders, including the entire common border with the Sudan. Between 15,000 and 20,000 former Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) soldiers fled into the Sudan with an estimated 13,000 pieces of assorted weapons, vehicles and helicopters. By that time, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) controlled every inch of their side of the border; there was no SPLA presence, at least, not in the areas that border Uganda. Accordingly, the Sudanese Army took control of all the arms from the defeated soldiers who had fled to the Sudan. Initially, the guns were kept at Parajok, in an SAF unit then under Lt. Col. Charles Ogeno. Thereafter, Uganda experienced the following problems with its Sudanese neighbours.

Beginning of the Sudan's hostile actions against Uganda

By April 1986, Uganda had started approaching the Sudan Government for the return of the arms, vehicles and helicopters that the fleeing UNLA soldiers had taken to the Sudan. After considerable resistance and reluctance on the part of the Sudan Government, only the helicopters were returned, around May 1986. To date, the arms and vehicles have not been returned.

On 19 August 1986, all the arms that had been removed from the defeated UNLA were handed back to them by the Sudan Government. The defeated elements of UNLA were mobilized from Parajok, Torit, Lobone, Obbo and Atepi, where they had scattered and were armed by SAF. On 22 August 1986, a combined force of SAF and Ugandan dissidents, coming from Nimule, Sudan, attacked the NRA 28th battalion at Bibia.

Although the bulk of the dissidents were promptly defeated by NRA, now renamed the Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF), remnants spilled into the villages in the countryside in northern Uganda, thus igniting the insurgency that has since wreaked havoc on civilians and the economy in the area. We have Lt. Mark Okello Oryema and others who took part in the attack on the 28th battalion of Bibia who can narrate how the Sudan armed them (dissidents) for the purpose of destabilizing Uganda.

Birth of rebellion in northern Uganda and Sudan's persistent policy of destabilization

Having mobilized, reorganized and armed the former UNLA, the Sudanese authorities renamed them the Uganda Peoples Defence Army/Movement (UPDA/M). After the Bibia attack, UPDA/M then started attacking NRA units in northern Uganda. It also attacked trading centres and staged ambushes on major roads, using the Sudan as its rear base. It was not until Saturday, 3 June 1988, that the UPDA/M surrendered to the Government after a peace accord was signed between

the rebels and the NRM Government. We have people who can attest to the fact that while UPDA/M conducted its guerrilla campaign in northern Uganda, it maintained its rear bases in the Sudan.

Some remnants of UPDA/M later ganged up to join Joseph Kony, who has been changing the name - to Holy Spirit Movement Force (HSMF II) and lately to Lords Resistance Army (LRA). While carrying outs its guerrilla campaign in northern Uganda, the HMSF II of Joseph Kony continued to go to Owiny-Kibul, Parajok in the Sudan, to get supplies, namely arms and ammunition. This activity reached a climax in 1993/94 when LRA was facing total defeat at the hands of NRA (UPDF). LRA then ran to the Sudan and established bases at Palotaka, Owiny-Kibul, Parajok and Lobone/Parajok junction where they occupied the same defences with SAF until 25 October 1995 when they, together with their supporters - SAF, were routed by SPLA.

It was from the above-mentioned bases that LRA, on several occasions, crossed into northern Uganda to wreak havoc on the local population. The following recent cases can attest to this fact:

(a) On 18 April 1995, a force of between 150 and 300 LRA rebels, who had previously crossed from their base at Parajok fully armed with mortars, assault rifles, land-mines etc., attacked the Lukung trading centre in the Kitgum district. In the process, 19 civilians were killed, more than 30 were abducted and many homesteads and the entire trading centre were burnt down. They also looted the Lukung dispensary;

(b) On 20 April 1995, an estimated force of between 250 and 400 LRA rebels, who had previously crossed from their base at Parajok, Sudan, attacked the Atiak trading centre. More than 250 civilians were killed in the attack, including 45 students and three tutors at Atiak Technical College, and more than 200 homes and 10 shops were burnt down by the rebels. Diplomats accredited to Uganda were invited by the Uganda Government to witness the scene of the Atiak massacres;

(c) On 28 July 1995, a rebel force estimated at between 300 and 500 LRA rebels, who had previously crossed into Uganda from their base at Owiny-Kibul, attacked the Padibe trading centre in Kitgum district. As a result, three civilians were killed, 10 civilians were abducted, more than 150 homes/granaries were burnt down and the entire trading centre was ransacked and burnt down. They also looted drugs from the Padibe Mission Hospital. It is important to note that on all occasions, after the attacks mentioned above, LRA rebels retreated to their rear bases in the Sudan;

(d) There is evidence from those who escaped from LRA when their bases at Owiny-Kibul, Palotaka, Parajok were captured who can amply describe what sort of assistance LRA gets from the Sudan Government. There are also those who were captured by SPLA in the process of routing LRA/SAF from the bases already mentioned above who can also give testimony to the Sudan's designs for destabilizing Uganda;

(e) On 8 November 1995, at Ten-Ten Village south of Lobone in southern Sudan, SPLA handed over 128 Kony fighters who were captured in battle at Kit 1

on 16 November 1995. On 22 November 1995, SPLA handed over to Ugandan local authorities at Ngomoromo, Kitgum district another 16 LRA fighters who were captured at Kit 1 on 16 November 1995. This was in the presence of both local and international journalists.

Present LRA bases in southern Sudan

After 25 October 1995, both LRA and SAF moved to Aruu on Nimule - Juba Road, about 79 miles from the Uganda border. At Aruu, LRA established its headquarters and training base, where top LRA leaders George Komakech Omona, alias "Brig". Joseph Kony, alias "Maj. Gen." and others are now based. LRA also has detachments at Kit 1 and Karpeto, in the same defence with SAF.

It is from this headquarters base at Aruu in the Sudan that the Sudanese Government organizes, trains and arms LRA with all types of machine-guns, mortars, SAM 7 missiles, assault rifles, anti-tank and anti-personnel mines, uniforms and communication equipment and then dispatches them through the vast wilderness of southern Sudan into Uganda to commit atrocities against the innocent civilians of northern Uganda. These LRA atrocities range from planting anti-tank and anti-personnel mines, the abduction of schoolchildren and innocent civilians, cutting off peoples' lips and mouths, burning of homes and social infrastructure like trading centres, rape etc.

Beginning of rebellion in north-western Uganda

It should also be mentioned that while in the east bank the Sudan has been organizing and arming LRA, in the west bank the Sudan as maintained and reorganized elements of former dictator Idi Amin under Col. Juma Oris, Lt. Col. Abdalatif Tiwa, Lt. Col. Atocon, Lt. Col. Bamuze, Maj. Drazu and others. They have been organized and armed under the banner of the West Nile Bank Front (WNBF).

These former soldiers of Idi Amin had been in several places in southern Sudan, namely, Rajab West, eight miles south of Juba, before being organized and later moved through Yei to Morobo where WNBF established its headquarters/base. From Morobo, WNBF started recruitment, drawing some of their recruits from north-western Uganda. After training at Morobo, WNBF was first used by SAF as reinforcement in its bid to recapture the Baazi and Kaya garrisons from SPLA in August 1995.

Present WNBF bases in southern Sudan - West Bank

Apart from its headquarters at Morobo, at present WNBF has bases at the following locations, all in the Sudan: Kaya, Dubulabe Pokii, Kimba and Araba-Miju. It is from these bases, with the support of the Sudanese Armed Forces based at Kaya, that WNBF launches attacks on Uganda in north-western Uganda.

As a result of persistent WNBF attacks on the civilian population in the areas along the Uganda/Sudan border, especially between February and April 1996, the local people in the parishes of Oraba and Ludara of Koboko were displaced and their property destroyed or looted by the WNBF rebels. The displaced populations from Koboko/Aringa counties have had to seek refuge in other safer

areas. Like LRA, WNBF is fully armed by SAF with mortars, machine-guns of all types, assault rifles, communication equipment and uniforms.

UPDF has also been able to counter their activities and has, in the process, managed to capture prisoners-of-war who can give evidence about the Sudan's continued aggression and destabilization practices. Also, a number of WNBF rebels have surrendered to UPDF and local authorities in the west Nile region and they can attest to the fact that the Sudan has been arming and training them. For example, on 25 July 1996, WNBF Maj. Saidi Aile surrendered to UPDF, together with 3 captains, 4 lieutenants and 11 of other ranks, with the following equipment: 6 sub-machine-guns, 23 full magazines of sub-machine-gun ammunition, 1 RPG shell and 1 barrel of a medium machine-gun.

According to time-honoured international conventions, refugees from a neighbouring country are not supposed to stay near the border of their home country. They are supposed to be 50 kilometres from the common border of the country of origin and the country of asylum. Uganda has on numerous occasions pointed this out to the Sudanese authorities. It has been the subject of several joint resolutions that have never been implemented and continues to remain the major factor of our destabilization by the Sudan.

Sudanese air bombardment of Uganda territory and violation of airspace

Coupled with all the above, the Sudan has, since 1989, been engaged in other acts of destabilization and aggression against Uganda. On several occasions, Sudanese Air Force fighter planes have violated Uganda's airspace and on some occasions bombed Uganda territory. Since 1989, Sudanese Air Force military fighter planes have violated Uganda's airspace not less than 150 times. And in all these violations, not less than 100 bombs have been unleashed on Uganda's territory, causing great destruction and loss of life.

For example, since January 1995, Sudanese Antonov planes have violated our airspace not less than 20 times. In all such incidents, not less than 25 bombs have been unleased on Uganda's territory. A few examples will suffice to confirm this kind of provocation and aggression:

On 15 November 1989, a Sudanese Antonov bomber dropped two bombs on Moyo. One landed near the Moyo guesthouse and another at a place 200 metres from the Moyo Hospital. Three civilians were killed and eight were injured;

On 3 February 1990, another Sudanese Antonov plane bombed Moyo, killing 3 people and injuring 15 others;

On 20 September 1991, at 1100 hours, two Sudanese Antonov military planes bombed Ojapi primary school about 14 kilometres south-east of Koboko, Tara Parish, in Maracha County. Three people were killed, including a student. Six others were injured;

On 21 May 1992, two Sudanese Air Force Antonov planes from the Sudan, flying at high altitude, raided Moyo, dropping four bombs approximately 5 metres away from the Moyo government prison. No casualties were registered;

On 23 January 1995, a Sudanese Antonov plane bombed Ngomoromo at 1000 hours. It was near the defence of the UPDF 67th battalion. One bomb weighing 250 kilograms was released, and it dug a crater 4 metres deep and 7 metres wide;

On 5 March 1995, in the 409th brigade, sector west Nile, a Sudanese Antonov plane shelled Uganda's territory in the area of Oraba parish. Some of the bomblets that did not explode remained in the sector of the 55th battalion and they can be exhibited as evidence.

In the 503rd brigade, sector Kitgum, in areas then under the 67th and 69th battalions, a Sudanese Air Force Antonov plane violated Uganda's airspace and later dropped 10 bombs that landed away from the NRA defence.

It should be emphasized that these bombings (air violations) and others not recorded above of Uganda's territory by Sudanese Air Force planes have left behind deep craters. To date, such craters are evident in Kitgum, Moyo and Arua districts of northern Uganda. On a number of occasions, the Uganda Government has invited diplomats and ambassadors accredited to Uganda to go to see for themselves the provocation and aggression committed by the Sudan as a result of such bombing of our territory.

As if the air violations and bombings of Uganda's territory have not been provocation enough, the Sudan has, since 1987, been trying to provoke Uganda into an all-out war by sending batches of its troops into Uganda territory in violation of international borders.

The following examples illustrate the Sudan's continued policy of aggression and provocation:

On 10 August 1987, about 500 Sudanese soldiers backed by Ugandan dissidents based in the Sudan crossed into Uganda and raided the home of Mr. Amin Onzi, burnt granaries and took away 10 bags of simsim after shooting to death two civilians;

On 29 December 1989, Sudanese Armed Forces, together with Ugandan dissidents based at Kaya, crossed into Uganda and attacked an NRA (UPDF) detachment at Oraba, killing 12 soldiers;

On 30 December 1989, an SAF convoy of brigade strength, under the command of Brig. Isaiah Paul, forced its way into Uganda through Oraba-Keli-Lima-Medigo and re-entered the Sudan through Kirwa;

On 27 August 1995, a combined force of SAF and WNBF numbering about 200 entered Uganda and occupied the Oraba police post. They staged a roadblock at the former Oraba immigration post for three days. While they staged the roadblock, others were cutting logs of trees to cover their trenches at Kaya. They were later attacked by UPDF and forced back to Kaya, Sudan.

This kind of provocation by SAF positioned at various points along the Uganda/Sudan border has been coupled by SAF's indiscriminate shelling of Uganda's territory on several occasions.

For example, between 9 and 12 August 1995, more than 100 bombs were dropped on Ayipe and Oraba parishes of Koboko sub-county, Arua district by the Sudanese Air Force based at Kaya. These bombs killed five civilians and injured 15 others. Furthermore, for three consecutive days between 8 and 10 April 1996, SAF based at Kaya shelled Uganda territory between Keri and Oraba in north-western Uganda from 0630 to 1200 hours.

Sudan's efforts to disrupt international relief efforts to Sudanese refugees

Apart from LRA activities and atrocities on the civilian population in northern Uganda, the Sudan is also using both LRA and WNBF to disrupt international efforts to help displaced populations still in southern Sudan and those in refugee camps in northern and north-western Uganda. This has been evidenced by the indiscriminate mining of major routes that pass through northern Uganda leading to displaced populations in Lobone, Mogali and Kirwa, and the recent LRA/WNBF attacks on refugee camps in the northern region. The latest incidents took place on 13 July 1996 when a group of about 200 LRA rebels, who had previously crossed from their base at Aruu, attacked Agago and Acholi-Pii Sudanese refugee camps in Kitgum district. Some 108 refugees were killed in the attack and more than 30 injured, and entire homesteads were burnt down.

The morals of destabilization

These agents of destabilization from the Sudan do not adhere to any conventional morality. If they were targeting the government army, their perceived foe, this would be interpreted as a legitimate target, but they continue to commit crimes against the innocent local population, as is the case at present. LRA, as an agent of the Sudan's strategy of destabilization and aggression, plants land-mines indiscriminately on village paths, school compounds, water points (wells), gardens and gates to medical centres, maiming non-combatants, including children.

The UPDF has always come out to track down these bandits whenever they make incursions into Uganda from their bases in the Sudan and has in the process captured some prisoners-of-war, arms, SAF military uniforms and abductees who have been trained against their will. All are available as evidence to show that the Sudan has been aiding these armed bandits in its grand scheme of destabilizing Uganda. Rebels of both LRA and WNBF who surrender to UPDF and civilian authorities and those who have been captured in action by UPDF confirm that their rear base is the Sudan where they have training camps. They further confirm that the Sudan is the source of all their war materials, namely, arms, mines, uniforms etc. Arms and other war materials such as uniforms captured from WNBF/LRA rebels implicate the Sudan as the backer of these bandits.

Sudanese monitoring team in Uganda

The Sudan has been suspicious and has accused Uganda on many occasions of not only arming and supporting SPLA but also of allowing its territory to be used as a supply route for the SPLA forces. Uganda has continuously and categorically denied this falsehood.

In order to put an end to these allegations, H.E. President Museveni proposed that the Sudan Government station a Sudanese monitoring team on the Uganda side of our common border, to monitor and ascertain Uganda's alleged support for SPLA and the route for SPLA forces.

The team was dispatched and put in place in 1990. They first decided to occupy all the major bridges across the Nile, which they did. Later on, they said they no longer wanted to stay on the bridges but rather in Moyo, Arua and Gulu. They had permanent liaison offices in those towns. In all the years they stayed in Uganda as Sudanese monitors they never found even one case of arms identified as entering the Sudan from Uganda and never proved the alleged support for SPLA.

The Sudanese monitoring team was eventually expelled from Uganda when they started passing on information to destabilize Uganda.

Uganda has sacrificed a considerable amount in its efforts to allay the fears of the Sudan, but the regime still maintains that Uganda supports SPLA. The regime, however, has no evidence of Uganda's involvement in SPLA activities, except for old ammunition boxes brought into the Sudan by the fleeing UNLA soldiers in 1986, which they continue to parade around.

As far as Uganda is concerned, and what it has consistently maintained, is that the Sudanese conflict is an internal matter that dates as far back as 1955 and should be solved by the Sudanese people themselves. Uganda has nothing to do with the internal conflict and should not be dragged into it by the Sudanese Government. Uganda rejects and dismisses the Sudanese allegations and categorically denies any involvement in Sudanese internal affairs.

In the meantime, Uganda continues to take the brunt of the Sudanese refugee problem with many fleeing into northern and north-western Uganda owing to the conflicts in the Sudan since 1961. Nearly 300,000 Sudanese refugees spread throughout camps in northern Uganda are present at any given time in Uganda.

How to improve and normalize relations with the Sudan?

In sharp contrast to its widely publicized public relations stunts, it is on record that the Sudanese regime has consistently reneged on mediation efforts by friendly countries like the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Malawi. It is instructive to recall that while we were meeting with the Sudanese for peace talks, the Sudanese Embassy in Kampala was busy recruiting some of our youths and funding them to start another rebel movement in central Uganda. Uganda therefore finds the Sudanese claims of being frustrated in its search for a peaceful resolution of the regional conflict highly hypocritical and sinister.

The above notwithstanding, however, Uganda has consistently informed the Sudan through intermediaries that the resumption of severed diplomatic and normal relations will only be possible if the Sudan abandons its quarrelsome foreign policy and responds to the following reasonable demands:

1. Disband and disarm the rebels based in the Sudan.

2. Confine the rebels in a place that can be monitored and verified.

3. Confine or expel the leaders of the rebels in the Sudan to a second country of asylum if confinement is not possible or if they cannot be returned to Uganda.

Conclusion

As stated earlier, Uganda remains open to re-establish normal ties with the Sudan, provided the Khartoum Government can demonstrate a clear and honest commitment to maintaining good relations by fulfilling without reservations the three minimum demands put forth by Uganda.